



# NEWS FROM THE PRAIRIE

## SPRING 2020

PRESERVING OUR REGION'S HISTORY

## Letter From the President

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you well and happy as we all find ourselves altering our lives due to the coronavirus outbreak. As we live through these unprecedented times, I can't help but wonder how future historians might record our story. I've gone back to the April 1996 *Historical Bulletin* and read Ms. Ellen West's piece on the Influenza Epidemic of 1918 that claimed the life of her grandmother. It's an interesting read and eerily similar to our current situation. It seems our efforts to stay at home when we can, and social distance when we're out, will result in a happier ending than Ms. Ellen's story had. Please take care of yourselves and your families, friends and neighbors.

I regret that we had to cancel our April meeting, I missed the fellowship that comes with our potluck, and we certainly missed a wonderful presentation that would have come from State Historian Dr. David Ware. We are planning to have our potluck prior to our July meeting, which will be held at PCCUA in DeWitt. Also, we hope to have Dr. Ware as our guest speaker at a future meeting.

We were extremely pleased to learn of the Arkansas Historical Association awarding Glenn Mosenthin's article "Jess Orval Dockery: Stuttgart's Pioneering Aviator" as best biography in a county or local journal, as chosen by their awards committee. We are all well aware of Glenn's commitment to excellence and accuracy in recording the history of the Grand Prairie and I am grateful to have him as our Bulletin editor. His efforts in researching and writing continue to fill in gaps in our history that otherwise might have been lost forever.

I look forward to the time we can all be together again.

Respectfully,

*Raeann Braithwaite*

President, Grand Prairie Historical Society

# A Letter from the State Historian

Greetings—

As I write this message, I have been in this post for a little over two months. Over the last 20 years I have approached the Archives or, as it was called, the Arkansas History Commission, as a patron and, periodically, a collaborator; I have always been delighted with its wealth of holdings and by the helpfulness and expertise of its staff. Two months “on the inside” have only deepened my appreciation of the Archives’ collections and the professionalism of those who are my colleagues. The developments of recent weeks have forced some changes in how we conduct our work, but rest assured, we are still at work and serving our patrons. Like many of you, the Archives staff of our three physical locations have been authorized to work remotely. Our research room, as well as our NEARA and SARA facilities, are closed to the public, but managers and administrative staff are answering queries that reach us by telephone, email, social media and, of course, conventional mail. New blog posts will appear regularly and as for our newsletter – well, here it is!

As importantly, our website and digital collections, effectively our “fourth location,” are available and ready for researchers and browsers alike. The current health emergency has underlined for us the need to refine and expand our online offerings, so several Archives staff members are at work preparing new content to be uploaded for access, beginning this summer, on our new website and digital collections platform. Our aim is to be able to offer more information – documents, images, lesson plans and other materials – through an accessible and intuitive portal.

Other important work continues during this period of semi-closure. In recent weeks, we have received or retrieved significant items and collections. Our microphotography staff continue work on preparing our contributions to the National Digital Newspapers Program, an undertaking of the Library of Congress in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities. This is a long-term effort to develop an Internet-based, free searchable database of U.S. newspapers with descriptive information and select digitization of historic pages, which will be permanently maintained at the Library of Congress. The ASA, with its unmatched microfilmed collection of early Arkansas imprints, is the state’s NDNP partner. Good things will come of this, and we will keep you abreast of progress in newsletters to come.

Our staff have other projects in hand as well, including transcribing our venerable and still-useful card-based Biographical into a searchable digital format. This involves staff members trying to translate previous compilers’ sometimes obscure abbreviated citations for newspapers, magazines and other publications. What seemed perfectly clear to archivists of decades ago may be a little less so for their present-day successors, but the Archives staff are game for this challenge! It may seem as though the world has ground to a near-halt, but we are here – both to carry on the day-to-day work of the Archives and to serve those who depend upon us. We’ll do our best to share information with you through social media and other outlets. We look forward to hearing from you and, hopefully sooner rather than later, welcoming you back to our “brick and mortar” locations in Little Rock, Washington and Powhatan.

Thank you for caring about Arkansas, past and present!

*David Ware*

Director, Arkansas State Archives

Courtesy of the Department of Arkansas Heritage.



This December 15, 1950 photo shows the Quack-Quack Club. Eustace Waggoner is at far left.



Eustace Waggoner after a successful hunt, December 15, 1950.  
*Photos courtesy of James Waggoner.*

## Why Not Now?

*Daily Leader and Arkansawyer* (Stuttgart), June 19, 1942

It seems to be an unwritten custom of Americans to wait until an outstanding person has passed to the great beyond before they pay him a just tribute. This unfair method of honoring our heroes has begun to pass out of the picture and well it should. Its passing was emphasized in Little Rock recently when that city changed the name of one of its parks, honoring General Douglas MacArthur, Arkansas's and the nation's greatest hero of the present war. Another tribute was paid General MacArthur last Sunday, when 170,000 people gathered in celebration of a day in his honor in Chicago. President Roosevelt glorified Dr. Wassell over a nation-wide hookup for his heroic acts during the present war. Stuttgart also has a war hero, decorated Wednesday with the Distinguished Flying Cross for his acts and deeds of bravery, so why not honor our native son? Our government is building today one of its largest airports near Stuttgart, and our good friend and honored citizen, Al G. Meehan proposed that this airport be named Scott McCuskey Airport in honor of Scott McCuskey, our greatest hero of the war so far.

Lieut. McCuskey spent the greatest part of his life in Stuttgart, being a graduate of the local high school, later attending the University of Arkansas and the University of Alabama and graduated from the Naval Air Base at Pensacola, Fla., in 1938. For four years he has been in the U.S. Flying Corps, where his acts of bravery were so outstanding that Admiral Nimitz decorated him with the Distinguished Flying Cross. Surely if the government recognizes his bravery, then we as his fellow citizens should do our utmost to pay him a tribute. To name the airport in his honor would be something that would stand as an incentive for the younger generation to remind them of their duty to their country. Lieutenant McCuskey is the son of Mrs. J. C. McCuskey of the city. He has two sisters, Mrs. William Gibson of Stuttgart, and Mrs. Charles Gingerich of Pine Bluff. His father (deceased) was a pioneer rice grower. To secure the name of McCuskey Field for the airport, it will require the efforts of everyone—the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Legion, Auxiliary, Lions, Band Mothers, members of the bar, city officials, ministers, and all others. Let's make an effort now.

Ed. note—The Stuttgart Army Airfield was not named for McCuskey as it turned out. Elbert Scott McCuskey was born February 8, 1915 in Little Rock. He was the top scoring fighter pilot during the Battle of Midway, and one of the U.S. Navy's early aces. He earned his wings and commission as an ensign in the Navy in October 1939. His first sea duty was aboard the carrier USS *Yorktown* on convoy escort and neutrality patrol duties. The routine quickly changed after Pearl Harbor. The *Yorktown* was reassigned to the Pacific and the group readied themselves and their aircraft for the action to come. McCuskey first tasted combat on February 1, 1942 when he and his wingman, Johnny Adams, downed a Kawanishi Type 97 Flying Boat off the Marshall Islands. It was the first aerial victory for both his unit and the *Yorktown*. In May 1942, during the Battle of the Coral Sea, and in June 1942, during the Battle of Midway, McCuskey added six more victories and three probables to his record before returning stateside. He was credited with 13½ aerial victories in all. His decorations included two Navy Crosses, four Distinguished Flying Crosses and eleven Air Medals.

McCuskey helped develop aerial team tactics to counter the Japanese *Zero* and also tested the "G" suit and other anti-blackout equipment. Volunteering for combat again in June 1943, he took with him a wealth of knowledge, which he passed on as the squadron's tactical officer. His was the first Navy unit to use the "G" suit in combat. Flying F6F Hellcats from the attack carrier USS *Bunker Hill*, they achieved much success during the island-hopping campaign across the central Pacific in 1944. Following the war, McCuskey served as a strategic and aviation planner in Washington, D.C., and, during 1949-50, was personal aide to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations. Later he commanded an anti-submarine squadron and served as Operations Officer aboard the attack carrier USS *Hornet*. Captain McCuskey was a graduate of the Air War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), having served on the staff of Air University and the faculty of ICAF. Retired from the Navy in 1965, he earned his Ed.D. and served as Professor of Economics at St Petersburg Junior College until 1980. Scott McCuskey died June 15, 1997 and is buried at Barrancas National Cemetery in Pensacola.

Some Advertisements from Across the Years

**Grand Prairie Poultry Farm.**  
**Soekland's Chickens are Invincible.**  
 The Past Season All Competitors  
 Went Down Before Them.

**At Pine Bluff State Fair. Oct. 1902.**  
 They won 1st fowl, 1st cock, 1st, 2d and 3d hens, 1st cockerel,  
 1st, 2d and 3d pullets, 1st, 2d and 3d pens; 1st on largest and  
 1st display and special prize on 10 highest scoring birds in show.

**At Little Rock, Ark., Poultry and Pet Stock  
 Show, Dec. 1902.**  
 Being the largest and best show ever held in the State, the  
 following list of prizes are credited to this enterprising Poultry  
 Farm: Black Mingoes, all premiums. Dark Brahmas, all pre-  
 miums. Single-Comb White Leghorns, first cock, 1st, 2d and 3d  
 hen and score tie on first pullet. This variety was then entered  
 for competition in the awards for first, second and third pens;  
 first, second and third trio and first, second and third pairs; the  
 score being as follows: First pen 187-87-100 points; second 187  
 62-100, and third 187-25-100, carrying off 2d pen and first trio in  
 class of 88.

**FINE STOCK FOR SALE at Reasonable Prices.**  
 Single setting of 15 Eggs, \$2.00, \$3.00, \$5.00. Per 100 for incubation \$20  
 Write for Catalogue and Special Prices on Large Orders.

**Address A. H. Soekland,**  
**Stuttgart, Arkansas.**

1902



**\$3.00**

**STUTTGART  
 TO  
 MEMPHIS  
 AND RETURN**

**Sunday, July 29, 1928**  
**ON "LONESTAR LIMITED"**  
 Leaves Stuttgart 3:55 A. M., arrives at Memphis  
 7:10 A. M.

**BASEBALL—MEMPHIS vs. BIRMINGHAM  
 PARKS, BOATING, OTHER AMUSEMENTS**  
 Tickets good in coaches only. No half fares. No  
 baggage checked.  
 Good for return on any train up to and including  
 "Lone Star Limited" leaving Memphis 11:00 p. m., Mon-  
 day, July 30th.  
 For full information ask Cotton Belt Ticket Agent.

1928

**SATURDAY**

**We will Pay 25c a Dozen for Eggs**  
**AND WILL SELL**

<b>FLOUR</b>	Homespun, 48 pounds	\$2.20
	Pillsbury Family Circle, 24 pounds	\$1.10
<b>P &amp; G SOAP</b>	10 Bars for	<b>40c</b>
<b>Campbell's Pork &amp; Beans</b>	3 for	<b>25c</b>
<b>Hand Packed Tomatoes</b>	3 for	<b>25c</b>
<b>Premium Soda Crackers</b>	per lb.	<b>16c</b>

**Special Price on all National Cakes  
 and Crackers**

We also have a Complete Line of Fireworks for  
 the 4th. Will be Closed Monday.

**H. C. STUMP GROCERY COMPANY**

1926

**Enjoy Sunday Dinner**

Cafeteria open 11 to 2 and 5 to 8 daily  
 Table service from 11 a. m. 'til 9 p. m.

Choice of five meats, many salads and choice of  
 ten vegetables

**HOME MADE PIES**

**MENU**

Cream of Chicken Soup or Chilled Tomato Juice	
Baked Sugar-cured Ham and Hawaiian Sauce	\$1.00
Fried Spring Chicken with Cream Gravy	1.00
Roast Young Hen with Celery Dressing	.85
Chicken Fried Steak with Cream Gravy	.85
Chicken Pot Pie	.85

**CHOICE OF THREE VEGETABLES**  
 Combination Salad, Hot Buttered Rolls or Corn  
 Muffins, Jello, Home Made Pie, Ice Cream  
 Coffee Tea Milk

**SPECIAL Plate Lunches**..... 55c to 75c

**ESQUIRE GRILL**  
 CAFETERIA AND TABLE SERVICE

1948

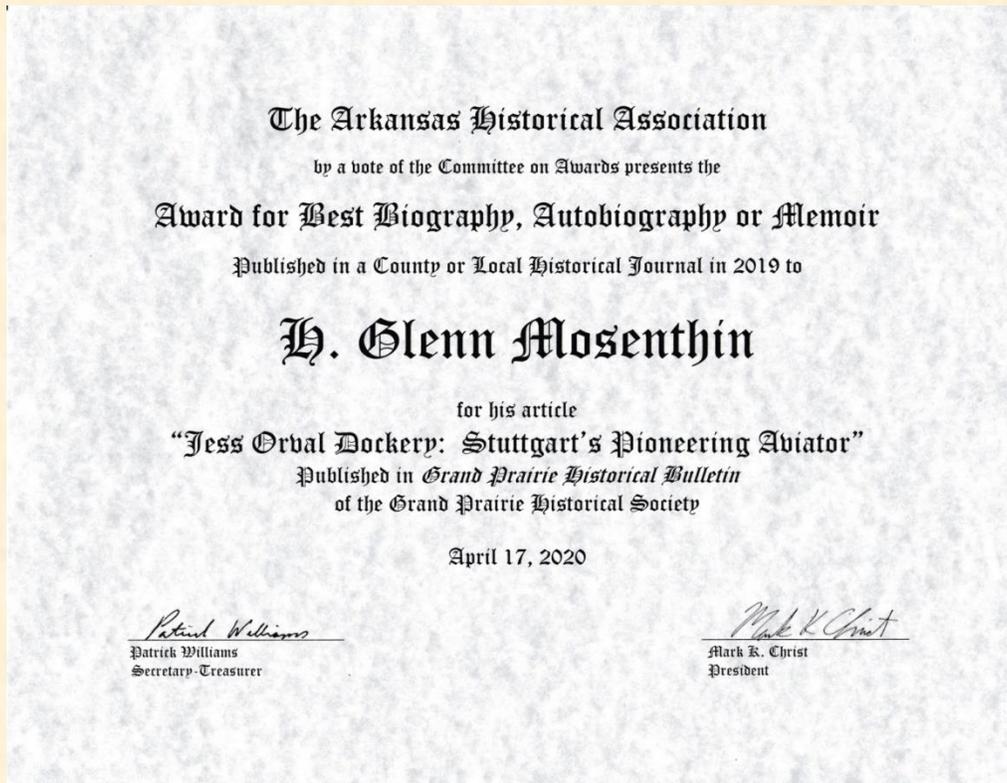
## Radio Station KWAK Will Go on the Air Tomorrow Morning: Unit Member of Mutual System at 1240 Kilocycles

*Daily Leader and Arkansawyer (Stuttgart), May 14, 1948*

Arkansas's newest radio station, KWAK, goes on the air at 6:00 a.m. tomorrow in Stuttgart. Broadcasting on 1240 kilocycles at 250 watts power, KWAK is a full time station and will be an outlet of the Mutual Broadcasting System and the Razorback Network. In addition, many programs originating in Greater Little Rock will be fed to the Stuttgart area by KXLR of North Little Rock through KWAK. Melvin Spann of Little Rock has been appointed manager of the station. On his staff will be Skip Landon of Stuttgart, chief of production; Jack Warden, formerly of Little Rock, chief engineer; and Carroll Lee, formerly of Pine Bluff, program director. Mr. Spann said that the new station plans on using Stuttgart talent for programs and Stuttgart residents for personnel whenever possible. Complete coverage of local, state, and national news will be given the station through regularly scheduled programs over the Mutual Network, including Fulton Lewis Jr. and Cedric Foster, and over the Razorback Network. Sports also will be featured with KWAK serving as an outlet in the Grand Prairie region for Razorback basketball and football games, the World Series, and other outstanding sports events. A special dedicatory program for the new hookup between Greater Little Rock and Stuttgart will begin at 2:00 p.m. Saturday. Greetings originating in the studios of KXLR in North Little Rock will bring messages to Stuttgart from Governor Laney, Mayor Sam Wassell of Little Rock, Mayor of Eldor Johnson of North Little Rock, Harvey C. Couch Jr., president of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Little Rock, and D. J. McFadyen, president of the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce. A special feature for KWAK will be a series of station identification messages especially recorded for the new station in Hollywood by Walt Disney Studios. The voice of Donald Duck identifies the station and the speaker and proclaims Stuttgart as the rice and duck capital of the world.



STUTTART RICE MILL COMPANY'S RICE BUYERS STARTING OUT TO BUY THE SEASON'S CROP.



GPHS is proud to receive our 24th award from Arkansas Historical Association.

---

Our thanks to those who have thus far purchased our new gold and platinum membership levels.  
We greatly appreciate your generous support of our organization!

Gold: Bob & Claudia Ahrens, David T. Carty, Marilyn Gibson, Eddie & Pat Lumsden, Glenn Mosenthin, Barbara Riley, Randall & Claudia Robison, James Waggoner, JoAnn West, and Lois Wilson.

Platinum: Frank & Suzanne Buerkle, John W. Cover, Christian Doughty, Paul Ted Buerkle Doughty, Richard Hill, and Charles Whiteside III.

---

Make plans to attend our summer quarterly meeting July 16 at the DeWitt Campus of PCCUA. We will feature our potluck dinner, normally held at our spring meeting, beginning at 6:00 p.m. A program on DeWitt's history will follow, presented by Jim and Terry Rasco. Our quarterly business session will conclude the meeting.

Follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/grandprairiehistory](http://www.facebook.com/grandprairiehistory).

Check out our website at [www.grandprairiehistory.org](http://www.grandprairiehistory.org)

<b>Grand Prairie Historical Society</b> P. O. Box 3621 Little Rock, AR 72203 870-830-1425 <a href="http://www.grandprairiehistory.org">www.grandprairiehistory.org</a>	<b>Officers</b> President: Raeann Braithwaite Vice-Pres: Gay Hampton Rusk Secretary: Gena Seidenschwarz Treasurer: Carol Roberson	<b>Newsletter Editor</b> Glenn Mosenthin  GPHS is a 501(c)(3) organization.
--	---	---